



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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*Audio comments from U.S. Attorney Todd P. Graves are available in MP3 format,
and may be downloaded from the district's Web site at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow*

UPDATE: OPERATION ICE PALACE
FORMER SIMS GENERAL STORE OWNER, FIVE OTHERS
SENTENCED FOR METH CONSPIRACY

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced today that six co-defendants – including the former owner of Sims General Store in McDonald County, Mo. – have been sentenced in federal court for their roles in a conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. These sentencing are the result of Operation Ice Palace, a long-term investigation into the illegal sale of large quantities of over-the-counter cold medications to methamphetamine manufacturers in southwest Missouri. Operation Ice Palace resulted in a series of indictments by a federal grand jury against 53 defendants.

Billy Richard Brassfield, 55, of Pineville, Mo., was sentenced on Sept. 13, 2004, by U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith to seven years and three months in federal prison without parole.

On May 20, 2004, **Brassfield** pleaded guilty to participating in a methamphetamine conspiracy that resulted in the manufacture and distribution of between 1.5 and 5 kilograms of methamphetamine. During the conspiracy, **Brassfield** owned and operated Sims General Store in McDonald County, Mo. From as early as 1999 to October 2000, Grave said, **Brassfield** diverted pseudoephedrine that he obtained for the store to co-defendant **Lonnie Weston**, 58, of McDonald County, for the purpose of manufacturing methamphetamine. **Brassfield** also allowed methamphetamine to be manufactured on his property.

“Operation Ice Palace targeted businesses that provided meth cooks with pseudoephedrine, a primary ingredient used to manufacture methamphetamine,” Graves said.

Under federal law, it is illegal to possess or distribute pseudoephedrine knowing (or having reasonable cause to believe) it will be used to manufacture methamphetamine. Such over-the-counter cold medications as Actifed contain pseudoephedrine.

“The law holds unscrupulous business owners just as accountable as the meth cooks and drug dealers they supply,” Graves said. “We are aggressively prosecuting all the links in the meth chain, including the illegal source of meth ingredients.”

Lonnie Weston was sentenced by U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith this morning to 30 years in federal prison without parole.

On June 18, 2004, **Lonnie Weston**, his sister **Sherry Woodard**, 44, of Washburn, Mo., and **Frances Duckett**, 38, of Pineville, Mo., were convicted by a federal jury. Sentencing hearings for **Woodard** and **Duckett** are scheduled on Jan. 20, 2005.

Lonnie Weston, **Woodard** and **Duckett** were each found guilty of participating in the conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine in McDonald County. In addition, **Woodard**, also an owner of Sims General Store during the time of the conspiracy, was found guilty of distributing pseudoephedrine. **Lonnie Weston** was also found guilty of possession with intent to distribute 500 grams or more of methamphetamine. Using ingredients obtained from **Woodard's** store, Grave said, **Lonnie Weston** manufactured methamphetamine and sold it to others to distribute.

Kevin Davis, 43, of Exeter, Mo., was sentenced on Sept. 13, 2004, by U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith to 10 years and 11 months in federal prison without parole.

On May 19, 2004, **Davis** pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Davis** admitted that he was present during 10 to 15 methamphetamine cooks and would act as a lookout during the manufacturing process. **Davis** was originally arrested on March 21, 2001, driving a stolen vehicle in McDonald County. Upon searching the vehicle, law enforcement officers discovered components of a methamphetamine laboratory, including lithium batteries, coffee filters, empty bottles of pseudoephedrine and anhydrous ammonia.

Michele Kreitel, 33, of Seligman, Mo., was sentenced on Sept. 13, 2004, by U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith to three years in federal prison without parole.

On May 19, 2004, **Kreitel** pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. **Kreitel** admitted that she purchased methamphetamine and assisted in the manufacture of methamphetamine between January 1999 and March 14, 2002.

Jody Weston, 22, of Washburn, Mo., was sentenced on Sept. 13, 2004, by U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith to seven years and three months in federal prison without parole.

On May 20, 2004, **Jody Weston** pleaded guilty to participating in the conspiracy, which resulted in the manufacture and distribution of between 1.5 and 5 kilograms of methamphetamine between January 1999 and March 14, 2002, in McDonald County, Mo. **Jody Weston** admitted

that he assisted in cooking methamphetamine and acted, at times, as a lookout during the manufacturing process. He also admitted that he distributed methamphetamine to others.

Craig Guinn, 41, of Westville, Okla., was sentenced on Sept. 13, 2004, by U.S. District Judge Ortrie D. Smith to five years in federal prison without parole.

On May 19, 2004, **Guinn** pleaded guilty to conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. By pleading guilty, **Guinn** admitted that he assisted in gathering precursors for the manufacture of methamphetamine. Specifically, he admitted that he participated in the theft of a 1,000-gallon anhydrous tank in Granby, Mo.

On June 18, 2004, **Rebecca Singleton**, 36, of Ginger Blue, Mo., pleaded guilty to participating in the conspiracy to distribute methamphetamine. A sentencing hearing has not yet been scheduled.

All of the defendants in this case were originally charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury on Oct. 16, 2003, in Springfield.

This case is being prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Randall D. Eggert. It was investigated by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, COMET (the Combined Ozarks Multi-jurisdictional Enforcement Team), the Missouri State Highway Patrol, the Southwest Missouri Drug Task Force, and the McDonald County Sheriff's Department.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at
www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow